

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 18 without my signature as it amends statutory provisions enacted by the voters, in direct conflict with Proposition 71. The measure provides that the statutory provisions, "may be amended to enhance the ability of the institute to further the purpose of the grant and loan programs created by the measure, by a bill introduced and passed no earlier than the third full calendar year following adoption, by 70 percent of the membership of both houses or the Legislature and signed by the Governor..." (California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative Section 8).

While I recognize the author's important role in launching Proposition 71, commend her efforts to closely monitor implementation and share the goal of assuring responsible fiscal oversight of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine and publicly funded stem cell research; I cannot support this bill as it is in direct conflict with the text of the Proposition as approved by the voters.

I am a strong supporter of stem cell research and the promise it holds to cure and treat serious conditions that afflict millions of Californians including diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injury. While I believe it is critical that the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine and its governing board, The Independent Citizen's Oversight Committee be responsible stewards of public funds and abide by strict standards of fiscal responsibility, we must respect the vote of the people to prohibit amendments to the Proposition until 2008. I encourage the Legislature to pursue a performance audit through the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, rather than this legislation, to ensure increased fiscal accountability of public funding for stem cell research.

I strongly agree with components of SB 18 that strive to ensure women are informed of the risks involved with medical procedures for egg donation, to prohibit the sale of eggs and embryos and to limit their reimbursement. I will work with the Legislature to reintroduce legislation to establish these appropriate parameters for stem cell research and better inform women of risks associated with egg donation in January.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger